

Abstinence*News*

NEBRASKA ABSTINENCE EDUCATION PROGRAM

Fall 2006 • Vol. 3 • No.3

FY 2007 Abstinence Education Sub Grants Awarded

Nebraska Abstinence Education Program has awarded nine sub grants to organizations statewide for the purpose of providing abstinence programming and activities to youth at the community level. Sub grant award amounts range from \$15,000 to \$25,000 and are based on results of a competitive application process that began in July 2006. Programming began October 1st with awards going to the following entities:

Alliance Area YMCA – Alliance, NE
Antelope Memorial Hospital – Neligh, NE
Columbus Youth for Christ – Columbus, NE
Four Corners Health Department – York, NE
Answers and Alternatives Crisis Pregnancy Center – Hastings, NE
Lincoln Crisis Pregnancy Center – Lincoln, NE
Lutheran Family Services – Lexington, NE
North Central District Health Department – O'Neill, NE
St. Elizabeth Foundation – Lincoln, NE



Each sub grant organization has planned abstinence programming tailored to fit the needs of the community or communities it serves. Program awareness and education activities are planned in those communities just beginning an abstinence education initiative such as Hastings and York. Other organizations are continuing programming efforts initiated during previous sub grant awards with focused efforts directed towards specific populations such as Hispanic and Native American youth. All sub grant programs have included components directed at reaching parents and other adults who work with youth.

In addition to these sub grants, targeted activities and programs are planned for Gretna and Falls City as part of HHSS Abstinence Education programming. For more information on Nebraska's Abstinence Education program or to contact a sub grant project director in your area contact Linda Henningsen, HHSS Office of Family Health at (402) 471-0538 or email: linda.henningsen@hhss.ne.gov.

It's life control!
Abstinence
Nebraska Abstinence Education Program

Care, Connect, Commit.

You can be the caring adult in the life of a child by following the three Cs:

- Care:** Take an interest, show concern, reach out to youth
- Connect:** Establish a rapport, provide guidance and support
- Commit:** Pledge yourself, invest yourself over time¹

This message and other helpful tools were presented to participants of the Second Regional Conference for *Helping America's Youth* (HAY) held in Denver on August 3 and 4, 2006. Among those from Nebraska attending were four representatives from *Nebraska Partnerships for Positive Youth Development* (NPPYD). Kim Kwapnioski, Region 4 Behavioral Health – Norfolk; Jessica Hilderbrand, Nebraska Children and Families Foundation – Lincoln; Cynthia Strasheim, University of Nebraska Lincoln Extension – Hastings;



and Margaret Vacek, Girls and Boys Town – Omaha, learned how to use the tools available through the HAY initiative to help Nebraska communities care, connect and commit to youth.

Among the highlights of the two-day conference was the keynote presentation by First Lady Laura Bush who joined local, regional, state leaders for a speakers



Laura Santana, a Junior at Lexington High School, spoke at the Helping America's Youth Conference in Denver. Laura is a member of Nuestro Futuro (Youth/Adult Partnership) in Lexington.

series on the challenges facing youth and the successful methods making a positive difference in the lives of America's youth.

NPPYD will be using the HAY community tools to connect resources and opportunities statewide to help communities support our youth in reaching their full potential. More information on NPPYD and the Helping America's Youth initiative (see "useful Links") can be found at:

<http://www.hhss.ne.gov/fah/PositiveYouthDevelopment/>.

¹ Helping America's Youth, Denver, Colorado 2006



Internet-Related Safety:

The Internet can be fun and educational but there are also predators pretending to be friends.

Reassure your children that they will not be punished if they come to you about a problem encountered online. If a child fears punishment because of pictures they received or possibly a chat that became sexual, they will be easier prey.

Parent Tips:

- Familiarize yourself with the Internet and Internet terminology.
- Place the computer in an area that will make monitoring easy.
- Never place the computer in a bedroom or secluded area.
- Review your child's old e-mail, bookmarks, cache or history (If these terms are foreign to you, your child should NOT have access to the Internet).
- Prohibit your child from accessing the Internet from a friend's home.
- Know your child's password and screen name.
- Make certain that your local library has a separate section of computers for children's use and that this area is monitored by an adult.



Some libraries provide computers for use that do not have any blocking software installed because it is

considered censorship for the adult users.

Insist that a teacher who has been properly trained in Internet safety issues closely monitors Internet access at school.



The Internet allows members to be notified when friends come online. Access the Internet under your child's screen name. See who may approach them. Who is looking for them!

Safety Tips:

Explain to your child the following:

- Never give their last name to anyone.
- Never give their address, city or telephone number.
- Never give the name of their school, church or other affiliations.
- Never send or receive pictures.
- Never agree to meet someone in person that they met on the Internet.
- Never have an online friend that they have not shared with you.

Just because the profile of chatter is that of a minor does not mean your child is really talking to another child.

Just because your child has chatted with an online "friend" for a long time, they are actually strangers.

4Parents.gov

*Abstinence
Save Sex
Until Marriage*

RESOURCES for PARENTS

MVParents.com

Search Institute - a national leader in helping parents and community leaders understand what children and teenagers need in their lives to make positive, responsible choices – launched MVParents, a campaign that provides parents with tools, encouragement, and information to support them in being the most valuable players in their children's lives.

MVParents.com, a new web-site owned by Search Institute and geared specifically toward parents, is a hub for information, advice and resources for parents. Additionally, parents can register for Everyday Parenting Ideas, a weekly e-mail update with tips, ideas, and encouragements.

Conversations on the Go: Clever Questions to Keep Teens and Grown-Ups Talking

Looking for a fun way to encourage fun-family and other youth-adult conversations? *Conversations on the Go* is bound to get you talking. The book is filled with intriguing questions, guaranteed to stretch the imagination and bring out each junior conversationalist's personality and true self. Take turns asking questions such as:

If you were the smartest person in the world, what would you use your intelligence to do?

What does integrity mean to you?

If you could take the next year off what would you do?

This stimulating, go-anywhere book give teens and adults a chance to find out what the other thinks about the big questions and the little ones. ISBN 1-57482-863-0

Ask Me Where I'm Going & Other Revealing Messages from Today's Teens

What teens want adults to know! This intimate little book will touch your heart as you read poignant and practical "real words" from teens – describing what they really want from the caring adults in their lives. "Let me share my worries with you. . . Never give up on me. . . Encourage me more, criticize me less."

An excellent primer for those new to relating with other teens, and an inspired reminder to those already in the "teen trenches." ISBN 1-57482-854-1



Another Parent Resource

New Release. . .from Boys Town Press

There Are No Simple Rules for Dating My Daughter

By Laura J. Buddenberg & Kathleen M. McGee

What do you say when your 13-year-old asks, "How can I make a guy go out with me?" How do you respond to a 17-year-old who says she's in love? What do you do with a daughter whose endless hookups and breakups leave her an emotional wreck? The answers, just like dating relationships, aren't always easy.

This book gives parents a window into the teen dating scene and shows them how to maintain their sanity amid all the crushes, courtships, and infatuations of adolescents. Both the fears and the fun of teen dating are revealed as the authors look at some of its biggest issues:

Age (How old should your daughter be before she starts dating, and what age should her dates be?)

Today's Teen Scene (How has dating changed since you were in high school?)

Car Dates (Does your daughter have an escape route if a good date goes bad?)

Appropriate Attire (When skin is in, is a bare midriff, backless dress, or plunging neckline being fashionable or foolish?)

Gift Giving (Are gifts of underwear going over the top?)

Internet Use (What are the dangers of meeting people and discussing dating relationships over the Web?)

Breaking Up (How do you console a heartbroken teen?)

What can you do to help your daughter gracefully exit a relationship?)

This book urges parents to sit down and talk seriously with daughters about the purpose of dating to create family dating rules. Sample activities will help you get the conversation started. Inside, real-life dating stories, many silly, some scary, serve to remind parents that dating is a valuable experience that shouldn't be denied or trivialized.

Laura Buddenberg is the mother of two teenaged daughters. Kathleen McGee, mother of one, is a former high school teacher. Together, they have worked with teens and parents for more than two decades and are the co-authors of *Who's Raising Your Child* and *Unmasking Sexual Con Games*. They also present workshops across the U.S. on teen relationships, sexual harassment and cyberbullying.

www.boystownpress.org

RESOURCES

House Rules:

Encourage supervised group activities. Know and support the groups that your teen participates in.



Set an age for dating. Be clear that there will be no dating before this age.

Make it clear that your teen will not date anyone more than two years older or younger than he or she is.

Make sure that your teen is not spending a lot of time in unsupervised situations. Sports, tutoring, and even after school

you be? What will you be doing? When will you be home? How can I reach you?

No alcohol. No drugs. No tobacco.

Be available to pick up your teen if he or she calls in an uncomfortable or threatening environment or situation.

Be available to talk with your teen daily. Good communication supports good decisions.

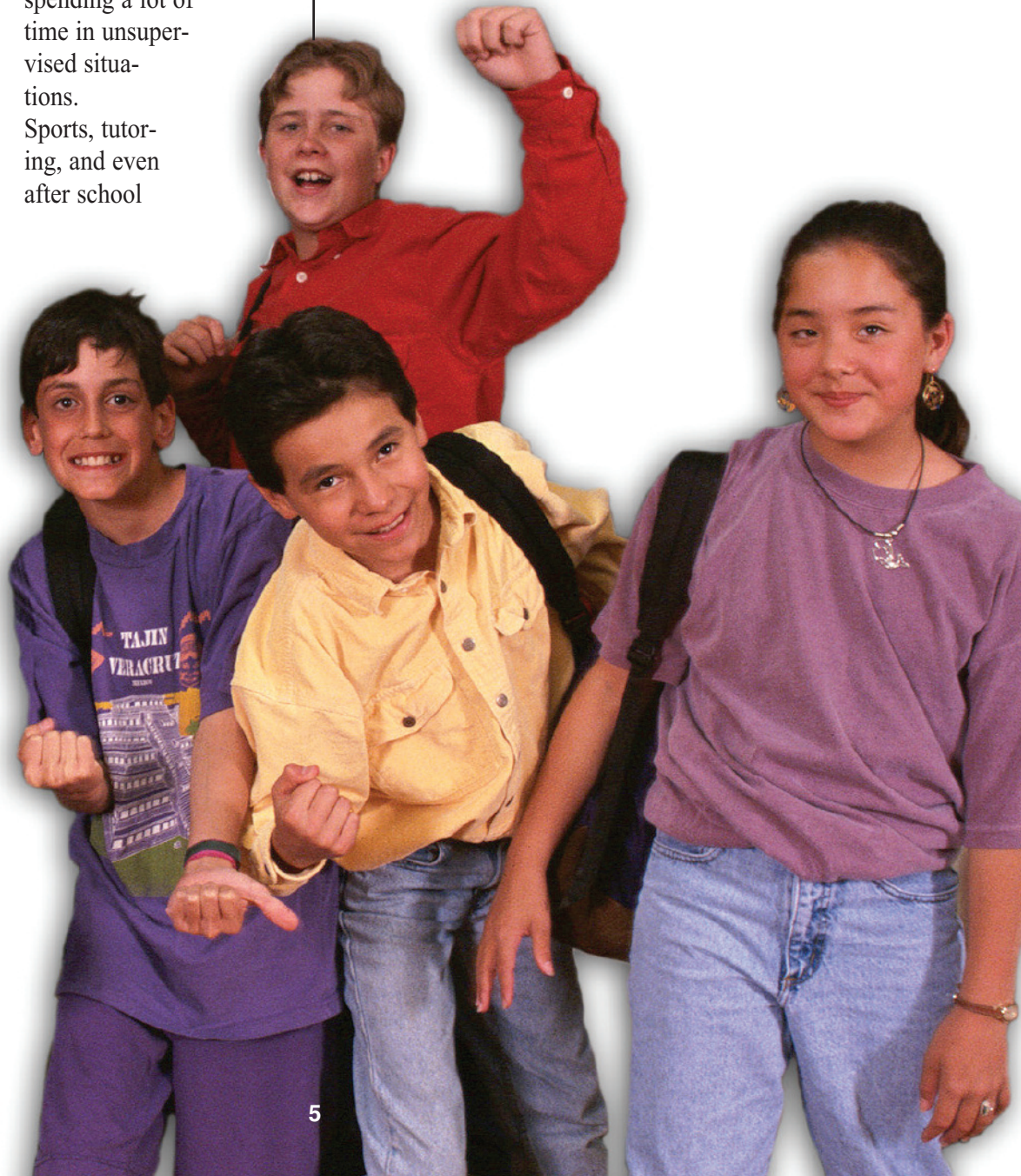


4Parents.gov

jobs are positive ways to ensure that your teen is safe and productive during the after-school hours.

Tell your teen that it is against the rules to entertain a boyfriend or girlfriend in personal spaces like bedrooms. "First sex" often happens at home in an unsupervised area of the house.

Set clear guidelines for your teen's outings: Where will



Under Construction.

Dr. Jay Giedd, chief of brain imaging in the child psychiatry branch at the National Institute of Mental Health, has spent more than 13 years performing MRIs and studying the brains of more than 1,800 kids. Through high-powered MRI technology, he has discovered that the adolescent brain, while fully grown in size, is still a long way from maturity.

Long after the size of the brain is established, it continues to undergo major stages of development. One of the last regions of the brain to mature is the pre-frontal cortex—home if the so-called “executive” functions—planning, setting priorities, organizing thoughts, suppressing impulses and weighing the consequences of one’s actions. This means the part of the brain young people need the most to develop good judgment and decision-making develops last!

This “under construction” nature of the adolescent brain helps explain why teenagers act the way they do, and why their behavior can be idealistic, energetic or enthusiastic at one moment, and cynical, lethargic and bored the next. At age 16, their bodies may look fully developed, but the minds are very much still in the development phase.

According to new studies, the pre-frontal cortex (CEO of the brain) usually does not reach a level of genuine

maturity until someone reaches their mid-twenties! “It’s sort of unfair to expect [teens] to have adult levels of organizational skills or decision-making before their brains are finished being built,” says Giedd.

Knowing the limitations if the adolescent brain does not excuse bad behavior. It does, however, reinforce the need for parents to provide persistent support and guidance. More than ever, adolescents need their parents to be an integral part of their lives. It’s not butting in, it’s pouring in your love and guidance to protect their future hope, health and happiness.

25 July 2006, MISH-Critical Concepts

NEBRASKA HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES SYSTEM



Abstinence News is published periodically by the Nebraska Abstinence Education Program and sponsored by the Nebraska Health and Human Services System

Publisher

Linda Henningsen
linda.henningsen@hhss.ne.gov
(402) 471-0538

Editor

Stephanie Bunner (NCDHD)
stephanie@ncdhd.info
(402) 336-2406



printed on recycled paper

ADA/EOE/AA

Results From The Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS): 2005 Are In

The YRBSS measures behaviors that contribute to the leading causes of morbidity and mortality among youth and adults. These are behaviors that contribute to:

- Unintentional injuries and violence
- Tobacco use
- Alcohol and other drug use
- Sexual behaviors
- Unhealthy dietary behaviors
- Inadequate physical activity

The national, state, and local Youth Risk Behavior Surveys are administered to 9th through 12th grade students drawn from probability samples of schools and students. The questionnaire is anonymous and self-administered. The surveys are completed in one 45-minute class period, and are conducted biennially usually in the spring. Data from the YRBS is cited often to support health-related legislation and policy decisions.

The results of this most recent survey show some promising data, indicative that youth are paying attention to their health. Among the positive data exhibited from 1991 to 2005 are:

Significant linear *decreases* in the following:

- Percentages of high school students who had had sexual intercourse during their lifetime.
- Percentages of high school students who had had sexual intercourse for the first time before age 13 years.
- Percentages of high school students who had had sexual intercourse with four or more persons during their life.
- Percentages of high school students over time who had had sexual intercourse with one or more persons during the 3 months preceding the survey.

Nebraska specific results may be found online within the national report at: <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/SS/SS5505.pdf>

2006 Department of Health & Human Services/Centers for Disease Control and Prevention